People's Party of Canada makes a stop in Ponoka

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Body

Former Progressive Conservative MP and founder of the People's Party of Canada (PPC) Maxime Bernier was in Ponoka for a "town hall" at the Ponoka Legion July 11.

The stop was part of the party's "Max Tour," and included Red Deer - Lacombe candidate Laura-Lynn Thompson.

Bernier, who has come under fire lately on social media and by some media outlets, being called "far-right" and criticized as attracting extremists, told the group of about 30 people gathered at the Legion, "When you do politics with conviction you can't compromise on your positions and we won't."

Bernier says the party aims to start a "common-sense revolution in this country" and says rather than vote-pandering, the party will "appeal to your intelligence."

The PPC's platform includes lowering taxes, repealing the carbon tax, getting pipelines approved, strengthening the immigration policy, eliminating corporate welfare, repealing Bill C-16 (about gender identity and expression), stop Motion 103 (about Islamophobia), pulling out of the UN's global immigration pact and making equalization fair for Alberta.

The PPC says that if necessary, it will use section 92(10) of the Canadian Constitution to impose pipelines.

At the meeting, Bernier said the party would balance the budget in two years by cutting spending on things such as foreign aid. According to Bernier, the Liberal government has given $4 Billion in foreign aid, including to: African dictators to fight climate change."

He says his party would not sign the Paris accord, and is the only party that wouldn't commit to reducing CO2 emissions.

"I'm not a climate-denier," he said, adding the real question is if people are the main cause of climate change.

"CO2 is food for plants, not pollution."

On immigration, Bernier says the government currently only interviews about 10 per cent of the thousands of immigrants being accepted into Canada. He says by reducing that amount, the government will have the time to interview all those wishing to enter the country.

One audience member asked about the PPC's stance on abortion, calling it murder and asking when it would start to be called what it is.

Bernier responded that as abortion is a moral issue, one of conscience, that his party would have no official stance on the issue, but his members would be free to table a private member's bill on the topic and all members would have a free vote.

He added that a discussion on it would be possible in his party, and wouldn't be in any other. He also said that if any legislation was to be made, consultation would have to be done to determine when a fetus is considered a human life.

Bernier said he recently tweeted, "doing an abortion after 24 weeks is murder."

Thompson, speaking about criticism the party has received for its viewpoints, said, "We don't care what you'll call us. We will speak."

She also encouraged those present to go watch "Unplanned."

"I believe we will not recognize our country if we do not stand."

Douglas Galavan, the PPC candidate for the Yellowhead riding, was present and spoke, giving his personal endorsement of Bernier and the party.

"This Paris Accord is going to wipe us out ... we have to stand our ground," said Galavan.

Galavan was a founding member of Rally Canada, but after reading the PPC platform, says he donated and joined the party the next day. As the party is non-partisan, he had to resign from Rally Canada.

"[The PPC] is our only solution."

Serving several terms as an elected PC MP for Beauce, Quebec since 2006 and serving as Minister of Foreign Affairs, Minister of Industry and Minister of State for Small Business and Tourism, Bernier resigned from the Conservative Party of Canada on Aug. 23, 2018 and soon after founded the PPC.

After the meeting concluded, the members formed a convoy, with vehicle flags and headed to Red Deer for the next engagement.

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